FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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The Elders visit to Zimbabwe

Former United States President Jimmy Carter and former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan are arriving in Southern Africa on Friday to make a first hand assessment of the humanitarian situation in Zimbabwe.

They will be joined in this assessment by fellow Elder and international advocate for women's and children's rights, Mrs Graça Machel.

Mr Annan said: "The Elders are deeply concerned about the impact of the deteriorating economic situation in Zimbabwe on the population. The purpose of our visit is to meet those working on the ground to better assess the extent of the crisis and how assistance can be improved.

"Food shortages, a lack of seed and fertiliser for planting and the breakdown in health services are all having a serious effect on the people. We understand that the situation requires an urgent response and that delays will only prolong the people's suffering.

"We have sought meetings with political leaders in Zimbabwe and would be pleased to hear their views. As we said earlier, we have no intention of becoming involved in the ongoing political negotiations in Zimbabwe. My colleagues and I look forward to our visit."

About The Elders

Convened in 2007 by Nelson Mandela and Graça Machel, The Elders is a group of globally respected leaders who offer their experience and independent voices to support innovative and cooperative approaches to addressing global challenges.

The Elders are: Kofi Annan, Ela Bhatt, Lakhdar Brahimi, Gro Harlem Brundtland, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Jimmy Carter, Graça Machel, Mary Robinson, Desmond Tutu and Muhammad Yunus. Aung San Suu Kyi is an honorary Elder.

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